



Texas Apartment Association

October 2025

Legislative/Media Message House – Fall 2025

Topline
Positioning

The Texas Apartment Association is made up of property owners, managers, and other rental housing professionals who proudly provide rental housing for more than 7 million Texans across the state.

Key Pillars

Evictions / Squatters:

We support a consistent, efficient and straightforward eviction process in Texas to ensure legal claims are timely resolved.

- Unpaid rent and property damage can cause a significant financial burden for property owners – especially small businesses.
- Allowing residents to remain on property who refuse to pay rent or abide by the terms of a lease takes away housing options for those in need.
- We support reforms to the eviction process under SB 38, which:
 - Created a clear legal framework for property owners to remove squatters through an expedited summary disposition process;
 - Streamlined eviction timelines by setting firm deadlines for service of petitions and writs (5 business days) and expediting appeals;
 - Improved court efficiency and predictability by establishing uniform procedures and timelines across jurisdictions;
 - Expanded service options by allowing other law enforcement officers to serve citations and writs when constables cannot act within 5 days; and
 - Requires rent payments during appeals to prevent abuse and ensure fairness for both parties.

Affordability / Property Taxes:

Housing affordability is impacted by multiple expense drivers including property taxes, insurance, labor and materials. These expenses have risen sharply over the last four years.

- Policies that facilitate the development, construction and operation of an array of rental housing options are the most effective ways to address affordability.
- Unprecedented levels of new rental housing supply in Texas benefit residents by making rental housing more affordable and available.
- Property taxes are one of the single largest expenses for rental housing owners.
- TAA supports reducing property taxes and continuing efforts to reform the property tax process to ensure a consistent, predictable approach to tax rates and property valuations.

Property Owner / Resident Relations

The relationship between property owners and their residents is governed by state and federal laws as well as a lease agreement. Lease contracts and applicable laws establish legal responsibilities for both property owners and their residents.

- TAA's lease agreement has been recognized by HUD as an innovative approach to enhancing the transparency of rent and applicable fees due under the lease.
- The TAA lease features a cover page with a Summary of Lease Details that enables prospective residents to easily identify their financial responsibilities and make an informed decision before signing a lease agreement.
- TAA encourages residents who may have an issue with their rental housing to contact their property owners and make them aware of the issue.
- Under Texas law, owners must respond within a reasonable amount of time to residents' request to repair conditions that materially affect their health and safety.
- Repairs not made within a reasonable time may allow residents to terminate the lease agreement or pursue other legal remedies.
- Residents do not have the right to unilaterally withhold the payment of rent.

Supporting
Messages

Disaster Response Messages – Fall/Winter

Emergencies and natural disasters can cause major damage and disruption, and the safety and well-being of residents are a top priority for rental property owners. We work closely with our local members, governmental bodies, and other entities to appropriately respond to and distribute necessary information and assistance to those impacted by emergencies or other natural disasters. Residents are encouraged to inspect any damage resulting from natural disasters and alert their property owner or manager as soon as possible.

Floods

- Floods have detrimental repercussions on residents, cities, properties, and more.
- We recommend residents first verify whether they are located in a flooding zone.
- Residents should utilize resources and information from the National Weather Service, local news, and emergency management agencies like the Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM) to stay informed about potential threats and recommended actions.
- We strongly encourage residents to register for local emergency alert systems to receive emergency warnings via text, e-mail, or phone calls.
- Turn around, don't drown: In the event of a flooding event, head for higher ground and stay there.
- Residents should consult Red Cross' detailed list of emergency shelters in the event that evacuation is necessary.
- Assemble a kit that includes items such as water, non-perishable food, medications, first aid, flashlights, batteries, battery-powered radio, personal hygiene items and important documents.
 - Ensure this kit is stored in an easily accessible location, like your vehicle.
- Remember that a flood WATCH indicates flooding, or flash flooding is possible in your area, while a flood WARNING means it is already occurring or will soon occur in your area.

Fire Prevention

- Fires can cause property damage, displace residents, and pose a severe risk to safety.
- Thoughtful prevention efforts can be implemented to help ensure the well-being of residents and safeguard property, such as:
 - Regular Inspections and Maintenance: Checking for signs of wear and damage, ensuring heating systems are serviced regularly, and confirming smoke alarms and sprinkler systems are installed and tested periodically;
 - Fire Safety Policies: Sharing information with residents about safe practices, such as cooking safety and the proper use of fire extinguishers, as well as enforcing no-smoking policies where appropriate;
 - Building Safety Features: Using fire-resistant materials where possible, maintaining clear exits and escape routes, and providing visible fire safety signage;
 - Resident Support: Offering emergency evacuation plans and, where applicable, conducting periodic drills to familiarize them with procedures; and
 - Collaboration with Local Fire Authorities: Establishing relationships with your local fire department and participating in community outreach and education programs.

Winter Storms & Insurance

- Winter storms in Texas can be very dangerous and sometimes deadly due to a lack of infrastructure to anticipate rapid temperature drops.
- We encourage residents to monitor winter storm warnings and alerts, including ahead of anticipated blizzards, heavy snow, freezing rain, or sleet.
- To prevent pipes from freezing, residents should make sure to drip faucets, including in bathroom and kitchen sinks.
- As a precautionary measure, residents should fill their bathtub with water and keep the heat on.
- It's important to remember that renters policies may not pay for damages caused by frozen pipes if precautionary steps are not taken.
- Residents should gather supplies needed to stay home for several days, with or without power, including bottled water, non-perishable food, a flashlight, batteries, first aid kit, and necessary medications.
- We encourage residents to remain in regular contact with property owners to ensure clear communication regarding the potential interruption of any services due to emergency winter weather.
- Texas law allows for the interruption of utility services – including water – in the event of a *bona fide emergency*.
- These steps can help avoid permanent damage that impact residents' ability to access vital utilities, and can help prevent safety issues from arising.

Disaster Response Messages – Spring/Summer

Emergencies and natural disasters can cause major damage and disruption, and the safety and well-being of residents are a top priority for rental property owners. We work closely with our local members, governmental bodies, and other entities to appropriately respond to and distribute necessary information and assistance to those impacted by emergencies or other natural disasters. Residents are encouraged to inspect any damage resulting from natural disasters and alert their property owner or manager as soon as possible.

Hurricanes & Floods

- Hurricanes and floods have detrimental repercussions on residents, cities, properties, and more.
- Due to Texas' extensive coastline, we recommend residents first verify whether they are located in a flooding zone.
- Residents should utilize resources and information from the National Weather Service, local news, and emergency management agencies like the Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM) to stay informed about potential threats and recommended actions.
- We strongly encourage residents to register for local emergency alert systems to receive emergency warnings via text, e-mail, or phone calls.
- **Turn around, don't drown:** In the event of a hurricane or flooding event, head for higher ground and stay there.
- Residents should consult Red Cross' detailed list of emergency shelters in the event that evacuation is necessary.
- Assemble a kit that includes items such as water, non-perishable food, medications, first aid, flashlights, batteries, battery-powered radio, personal hygiene items and important documents.
 - Ensure this kit is stored in an easily accessible location, like your vehicle.
- Remember that a flood WATCH indicates flooding, or flash flooding is possible in your area, while a flood WARNING means it is already occurring or will soon occur in your area.

Tornadoes

- Tornado alerts issued by the National Weather Service (NWS) alert individuals of imminent threats, and residents should take these alerts very seriously.
- While the entirety of Texas is not in Tornado Alley, Texas still ranks high among the most active tornado states.
- Remember that a tornado WATCH means weather conditions are favorable for tornado formation, and should serve as an alert for residents of the area to stay vigilant and be prepared to take.
- A tornado WARNING means a tornado has been sighted, or that a tornado is imminent and poses a direct threat to life and property.
- In the event of a tornado WARNING, residents should seek shelter immediately in a safe place, such as a basement or interior room without windows on the lowest floor.
- In the event of heightened possibility of tornadoes, we urge residents to keep the following in mind:
 - **Stay informed:** Monitor weather forecasts and warnings from reliable sources, including NWS.
 - **Identify a safe shelter:** Determine and practice going to the safest area of your rental dwelling during a tornado.
 - **Create an emergency kit:** Prepare an emergency kit with essential supplies.
 - **Develop a communication plan:** Establish a plan to reach friends, neighbors, and loved ones, including a designated meeting place.

Summer Heat & A/C

- With record-breaking temperatures expected during the summer months, we encourage residents should proactively communicate with their landlords regarding any air conditioning repairs needed.
- Property owners have an obligation to make repairs of conditions that materially affect the health or safety of residents, including A/C repairs.
- When a resident makes a written request for repairs, the timeline for repair begins, as stated in the TAA lease.
- While the law states there is a basic presumption that 7 days is a reasonable time for repairs, the repair length time can depend on several factors, including:
 - The temperature outside;
 - The temperature inside the apartment; and
 - Availability of parts and materials.
- Residents cannot withhold rent if they feel a repair isn't being made in time.
- If a full repair to the A/C unit is needed and the situation is serious enough to materially affect the health or safety of the resident and requires additional time, a temporary condition such as a portable air conditioning may be necessary.
- Residents should remain in frequent communication with property owners regarding the repair timeline and/or any temporary measures needed.